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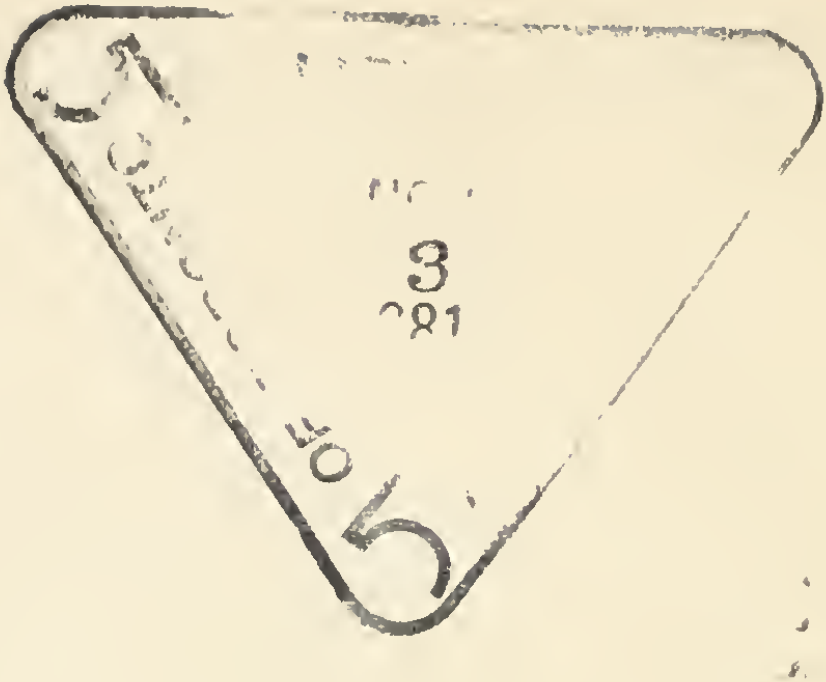
# THE DANCE OF DEATH

BY

HANS HOLBEIN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# THE

# DANCE OF DEATH

BY

## HANS HOLBEIN

THE FULL SERIES OF WOOD-ENGRAVINGS
REPRODUCED IN PHOTOTYPE
FROM THE PROOFS AND ORIGINAL EDITIONS

EDITED BY

DR F. LIPPMANN
DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL PRINT-ROOM BERLIN

93
26

LONDON
BERNARD QUARITCH
5
MDCCCLXXXVI

*The series of compositions by Hans Holbein illustrating the power of death over mankind, commonly called The Dance of Death was never finished according to the Master's original plan and the engravings have never been published in a uniform fashion. Between the years 1522—1526 Hans Lutzelburger the unrivalled woodcutter, whose graver alone was able to do proper justice to Holbein's designs engraved a part of the woodcuts at Basle, one of them the Duchess, bears his monogram.*

*It is now almost universally allowed that both the illustrations for the Old Testament as well as for the Dance of Death were executed by Holbein and Lutzelburger for the Lyons printer Melchior Trechsel. The greater*

*part of the former work and a considerable portion of the other was ready in 1526, when Lutzelburger's death and Holbein's departure for England interrupted the undertaking. Forty one of the engravings of the Dance were then quite finished; in two or three more the wood-engraver's work was nearly done, the designs were drawn on the blocks in some of the others and Holbein probably left the sketches for the remaining two.*

*The entire material, finished and unfinished, was given to Trechsel, when he 1526 laid claim to certain parts of Lutzelburger's property; the blocks of the Dance of Death and all belonging to it being brought to Lyons. A number of proofs had however been taken from the blocks before they had left Basle, no doubt already during Lutzelburger's life-time. These proofs are easy to recognize by the fact of their being printed on one side only, and by the clearness of the impressions. It seems that only a very limited number of such proofs were taken and that they were not intended for sale, nevertheless*

*two different issues or editions of the proofs can be distinguished, one edition of forty woodcuts has German headings in cursive type, while the other contains forty-one engravings with headings printed in Gothic letters; the additional cut is the Astronomer: "Der Sternsecher". Complete copies of the proofs with cursive headings are in the Museum at Basle and in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale and incomplete sets are to be found in other public and private collections. But perhaps the finest copy, both as regards the quality of the impressions and their state of preservation, is the one we have used for our facsimiles in the Print Collection of the Royal Museum at Berlin. Of the edition with Gothic headings only one imperfect copy is known, in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.*

*The blocks remained in Trechsel's hands for many years, before he seems to have thought of publishing them. On the one hand political considerations may have prevented him from printing in such a very Catholic town as Lyons, a work in which the Roman*

*clergy and the King of France are seen in an unfavorable light. In the picture of the Pope the Devil is sitting on the canopy over the throne, waiting for death to seize the Pontiff and eagerly watching for his soul. The Emperor, who has the well known features of Maxamilian is called away from his might and glory as the highest temporal power on earth, a judge and ruler of mankind, while the king, the exact likeness of Francis I, is taken from a sumptuous banquet, where death offers him a cup of wine. These facts and the consideration that the painter, who was employed at the court of Henry VIII had a strong leaning towards the reformed faith were no doubt the cause that Holbein's name was omitted in all editions of the Dance of Death, and allusion is only made to Lutzelburger, in the preface as an artist already deceased. Another reason for the tardy publication of the blocks may have been, that Trechsel wished to find an engraver capable of cutting the remaining woodcuts, conformably with those engraved by Lutzelburger. The first book-edition of Holbein's Dance of*

*Death, published by the brothers Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel finally appeared in 1538 with a French text and the title: "Les Simulachres et historiees Faces de la Mort, autant elegammment pourtraictes, que artificiellement imginees."*

*Trechsel had succeeded in obtaining writers able to make an introduction and short French verses to go with the pictures without offending the susceptibilities of a Catholic reader, or rendering the book suspicious. In this first edition he only published the 41 blocks engraved by Lutzelburger. The next editions, which were issued, two in 1452, — one with a Latin, the other with a French text, — and the third, (the fourth of the Lyons series) in 1545 have also no further woodcuts, but the fifth edition, (the second published in 1545 "Lugduni subscuti colonieuse") has eight more scenes of the Dance, viz: the Soldier; the Gamester; the Drinker; the Idiot Fool; the Highwayman; the Blind Man; the Waggoner and the Outcast; besides two groups of Children.*

*The later book-editions of the Dance of Death contain several groups of Putti or children*

*bearing arms, drums and trumpets, emblems of war, the chase and vineculture, in all six compositions. It is not at first easy to see the connection between these groups and the Dance of Death, though the fact of their being evidently designed by Holbein and having the same dimensions as the woodcuts of the Dance, that two at least seem to have been engraved by Lutzelburger, (Nos. LII and LIII of our phototypes) some of them being found in all the editions published after the year 1545, seems to prove that they were intended to belong to the work, perhaps as a joyous contrast to the tragical representations of destruction and death. The poets, who wrote the verses to Holbein's compositions, managed to bring these groups of children into a more or less strained connection with the weird figures of the Dance. Four of these groups of "Putti" are found in the edition of 1545 and in five other editions up to the year 1554. In the next edition, which appeared in 1562 two more groups are added, viz: Nos. LVII and LVIII of our facsimiles, of*

*the two latter No. LVII, designed like the others by Holbein, is engraved by a very feeble hand.*

*The above mentioned additional woodcuts of the Dance published after 1545 vary considerably in treatment. The "Soldier" and the "Waggoner" are engraved in so close an imitation of Lutzelburgers' style, that it seems not improbable, that he himself cut the greatest part of them, leaving only some details unfinished. The technical treatment of the Blind Man and the Highwayman is much inferior to that of these plates and they are certainly not by Lutzelburger, whilst the Drinker and the Gamester are by quite another hand, still less able to do justice to the finish and expression of Holbein's design.*

*The Bride and Bridegroom, two plates only published in the last edition of 1562, differ entirely in exection from the rest; Holbein's general outlines can still be distinguished, but he does not seem to have drawn the design himself on the blocks, or at most he could only have made a hasty sketch, whilst they*

*have evidently been cut by an artist of the Lyons school, who tried to imitate Lutzelburger's style.*

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*The aim of this little book is to give amateurs and the public an exact facsimile of the originals by means of a mechanical phototype process, and to form a complete collection of Holbein's compositions of the Dance of Death, which are never all to be found together in any one edition, except in the latest of 1562. But this edition being very rare and therefore hardly accesible to amateurs and having besides the disadvantage of the blocks being so much worn out and the majority of the copies so badly printed, that they only give a faint idea of the artistic value of the whole, we may therefore hope, that our facsimiles will be welcome to the admirers of the great artist. The first part of this volume contains the reproductions of the forty proofs with the headings in cursive type, the second part, consists of the "Astro-*

*nomer" and the woodcuts added to the editions after 1545. The six groups of children, which are found in the editions from 1545 to 1562, form the appendix.*

*The phototypes have been carefully executed in the Chalcographical Departement of the Imperial Press at Berlin.*

THE

# XXXX PROOFS

VII

THE BISHOP

Der Thůmherr.

VIII

THE CANON

Der Apt.

IX

THE ABBOT

X

THE PRIEST

Der Predicant.

XI

THE PREACHER

Der Münch.

XII

THE MONK

Der Artzet.

XIII

THE PHYSICIAN

Der Keyſer.

XIV

THE EMPEROR

Der Künig.

XV

THE KING

Der Hertzog.

XVI

THE DUKE

Der Groff.

XVII

THE COUNT

Der Ritter.

XVIII

THE KNIGHT

XIX

THE NOBLEMAN

Der Ratßherr.

XX

THE ALDERMAN

Die ſchöpffung aller ding.

I

THE CREATION

II

ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE

III

THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

*Adam bawgt die erden.*

IV

ADAM TILLING THE GROUND

Der Bapſt.

V

THE POPE

Der Cardinal.

VI

THE CARDINAL

Der Richter.

XXI

THE JUDGE

Der Fürſprách.

XXII

THE ADVOCATE

Der Rych man.

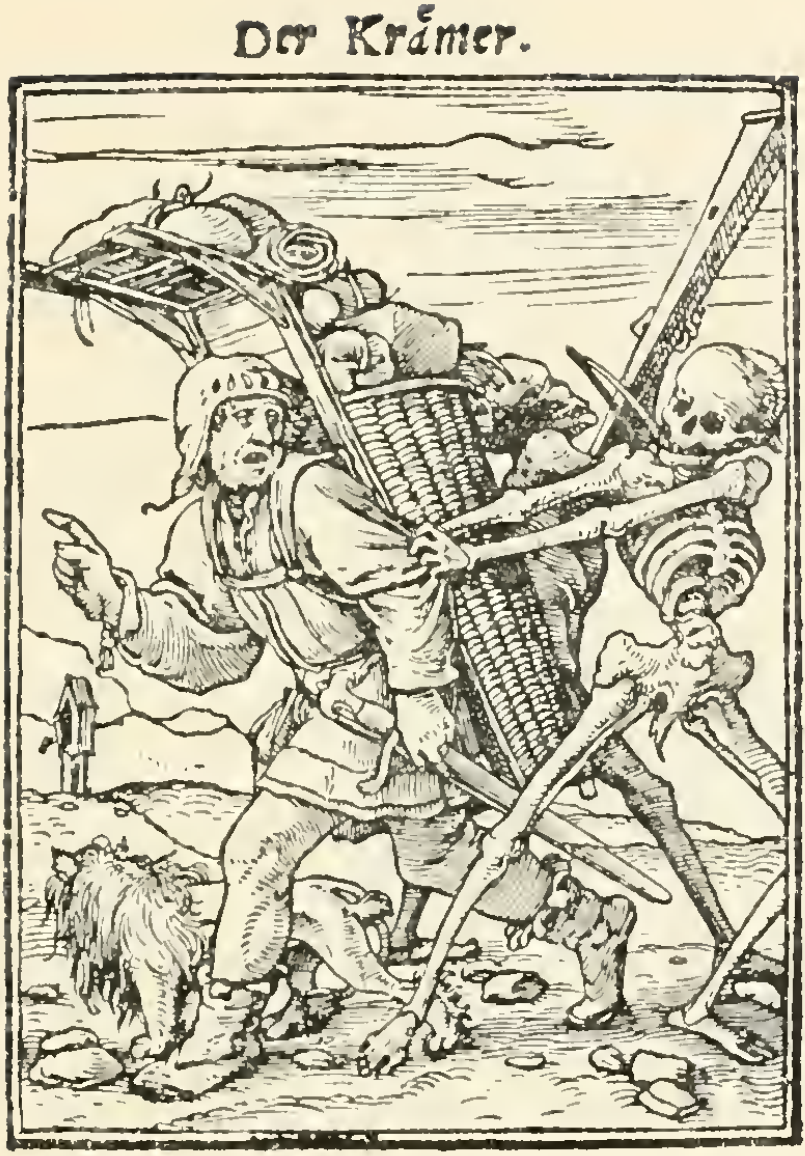
XXIII

THE RICH MAN

Der Kauffman.

XXIV

THE MERCHANT




XXV

THE PEDLER

Der Schiffman.

XXVI

THE MARINER

XXVII

THE PLOUGHMAN

Der Alt man.

XXVIII

THE OLD MAN

Die Keyſerinn.

XXIX

THE EMPRESS

Die Küniginn.

XXX

THE QUEEN

Die Hertzoginn.

XXXI

THE DUCHESS

Die Greffinn.

XXXII

THE COUNTESS

Die Edelfraw.

XXXIII

THE NOBLE LADY

Die Aptißinn.

XXXIV

THE ABBESS

Die Nunne.

XXXV

THE NUN

Daß Altweyb.

XXXVI

THE OLD WOMAN

XXXVII

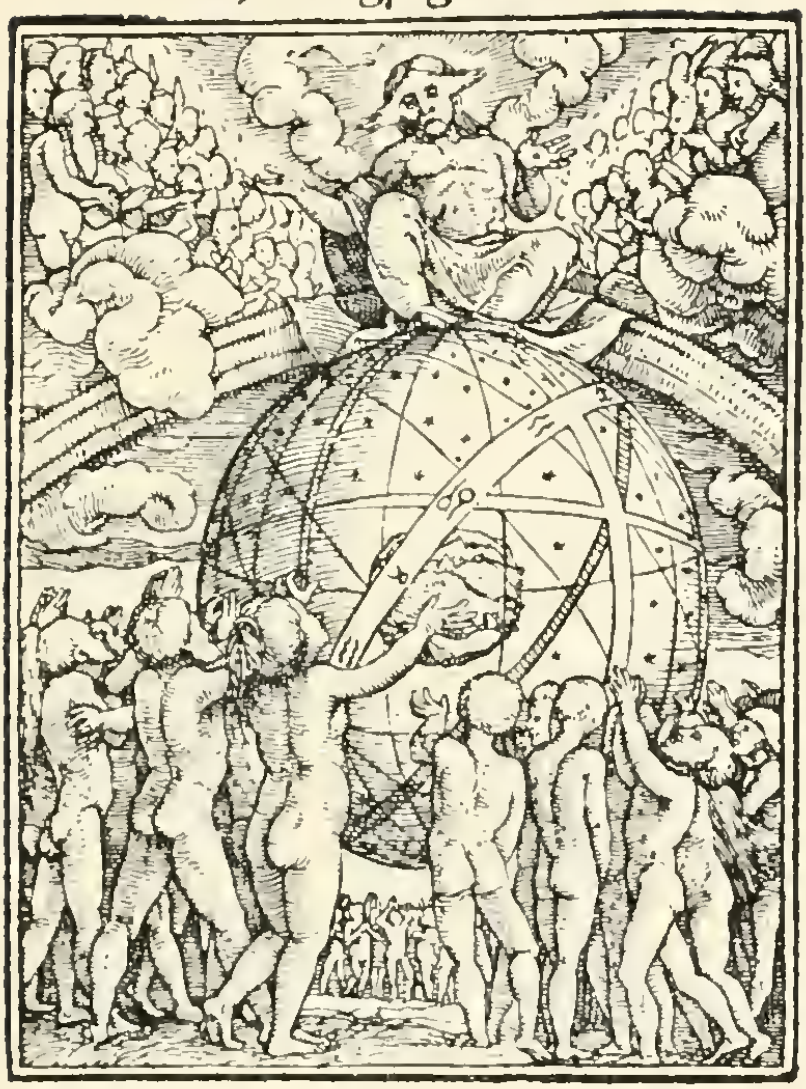
THE YOUNG CHILD

Gebeyn aller menſchen.

XXXVIII

THE END OF MANKIND

Daß Jüngst gericht.



XXXIX

THE LAST JUDGEMENT

XL

## THE ESCUTCHEON OF DEATH

# ADDITIONAL WOODCUTS

FROM THE EDITIONS

PUBLISHED

BETWEEN 1538 AND 1562

XLI

THE ASTRONOMER

1538

XLII

THE SOLDIER

1545

XLIII

THE GAMESTER

1545

XLIV

THE DRINKER

1545

XLV

THE IDIOT FOOL

1545

XLVI

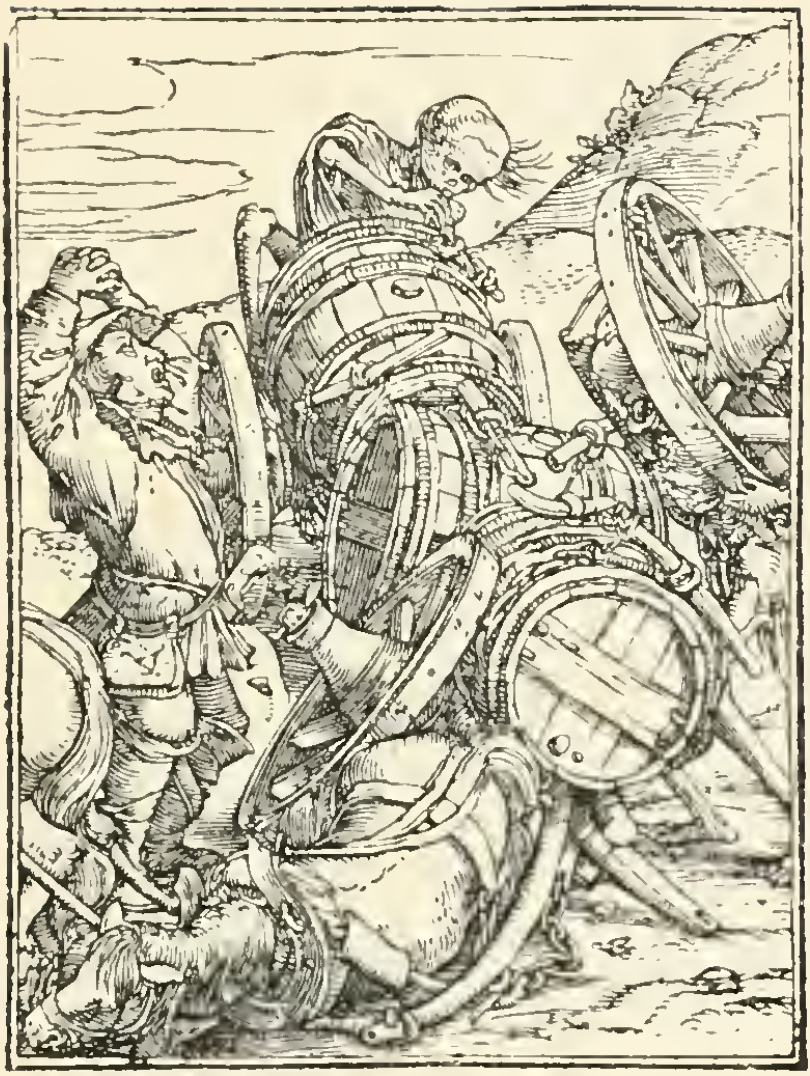
THE HIGHWAYMAN

1545

XLVII

THE BLIND MAN

1545



XLVIII

THE WAGGONER

1545

XLIX

THE OUTCAST

1545

L

THE BRIDE

1562

LI

THE BRIDEGROOM

1562

# APPENDIX

## THE

# GROUPS OF CHILDREN

## FROM THE EDITIONS

## PUBLISHED

## BETWEEN 1545 AND 1562

LII

LIII

LIV

LV

LVI

LVII

LVIII

# INDEX


I *The Creation*
II *Adam and Eve in Paradise*
III *The Expulsion from Paradise*
IV *Adam tilling the ground*
V *The Pope*
VI *The Cardinal*
VII *The Bishop*
VIII *The Canon*
IX *The Abbot*
X *The Priest*
XI *The Preacher*
XII *The Monk*
XIII *The Physician*
XIV *The Emperor*
XV *The King*
XVI *The Duke*
XVII *The Count*
XVIII *The Knight*

*XIX The Nobleman*
*XX The Alderman*
*XXI The Judge*
*XXII The Advocate*
*XXIII The Rich Man*
*XXIV The Merchant*
*XXV The Pedler*
*XXVI The Mariner*
*XXVII The Ploughman*
*XXVIII The Old Man*
*XXIX The Empress*
*XXX The Queen*
*XXXI The Duchess*
*XXXII The Countess*
*XXXIII The Noble Lady*
*XXXIV The Abbess*
*XXXV The Nun*
*XXXVI The Old Woman*
*XXXVII The Young Child*
*XXXVIII The End of Mankind*
*XXXIX The Last Judgement*
*XL The Escutcheon of Death*
*XLI The Astronomer*
*XLII The Soldier*

*XLIII The Gamester*
*XLIV The Drinker*
*XLV The Idiot Fool*
*XLVI The Highwayman*
*XLVII The Blind Man*
*XLVIII The Waggoner*
*XLIX The Outcast*
*L The Bride*
*LI The Bridegroom*
*LII - LVIII Groups of Children*

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Holbein, Hans, the Younger
(1497-1543)
The dance of death; ed.
Lippmann